



THE ADVISOR NEWSLETTER

July 2019

Volume 12, Issue 3

CPAC Leadership Corner

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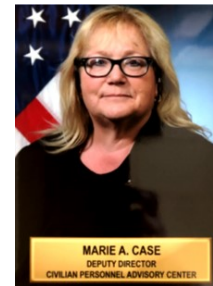
Greetings from the Leadership team here at the Fort Sam Houston Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC). As a leadership team, we are excited for the opportunity to provide outreach and partnering opportunities with our Commands, managers, other Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) partners, and our own CPAC team members.

We are honored to lead a team of ethical, collaborative, and educational CPAC team members who excel and work with high standards and integrity. At our CPAC, we believe in building strong team members and leaders, collaborating on goals as one team with each other and our customers; and we believe that there are many diverse approaches to problem solving – bottom line: We all contribute to the solution!

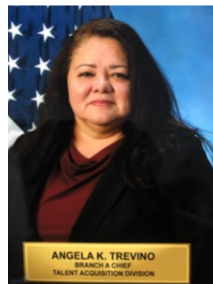
We will continue to provide the best advice and work products to all our customers. We will remain flexible as changes occur, which inevitably, changes will happen. We face the future with optimism and excitement with our main goal of providing excellent Human Resources services. Whatever comes our way, we have an excellent team of professionals to meet the challenges!



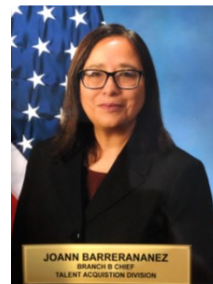
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CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER



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PATRICIA CHAPLIN
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DAVID GRIDER
CIVILIAN SUPPORT BRANCH
TALENT SUSTAINMENT DIVISION



Teamwork

- Submitted by Candice Martinez



Teamwork is the collaborative effort of a collective group of people to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in the most effective and efficient way. This article will provide a few elements that if applied, will allow us to excel in this area.

Element #1: Effective Communication: While communication is important, effective communication is the most important part of teamwork and involves consistently updating each person and never assuming that everyone has the same information. Being a good communicator also means being a good listener. By listening to your colleagues you show them respect, which is an essential trust-building method. Offering encouragement also goes a long

way to getting the best out of team members. Collaborating and being open to new ideas are also essential ingredients for a harmonious team environment.

Element #2. Delegation of Tasks: Teams that work well together understand the strengths and weaknesses of each team member. One of the benefits of strong teamwork is that team leaders and members are adept at identifying all aspects of a project and allocating tasks to the most appropriate team members.

Element #3. Efficient collaboration: A strong and cohesive team develops systems that allow them to collaborate efficiently to complete tasks in a timely manner. Through working together, colleagues will be aware of their own capabilities and the capabilities of the group in general, and can organize the workload accordingly.

Element #4. Sharing Ideas: When a team works well together, colleagues feel more comfortable offering suggestions and ideas. A respectful and trusting team environment will not only enable colleagues to think more creatively, but will lead to more productive and collaborative brainstorming sessions.

Element #5. Supporting Team Members: All workplaces provide challenges, but having a strong team environment in place can act as a support mechanism for staff members. They can help each other improve their own performance as well as working together toward improving their professional development. Building bonds of trust and reliance on each other can be extremely important when facing a particularly difficult challenge or if the

group is forced to deal with the loss of a team member while continuing to maintain productivity.

In conclusion, good teamwork means a synergistic way of working with each person committed towards a shared goal. Teamwork maximizes the individual strengths of team members by bringing out their best. It is therefore a necessity that leaders facilitate and build the teamwork skills of their people if they are to steer their organization toward success.



Summer Fun Facts



- It's the time of year that people enjoy spending outdoors. Most children have a long vacation from school in the summer. In older times, it was so they could help on the farm.
- Tropical cyclones known as hurricanes start to form this time of the year. Hurricanes have wind speeds of over 74.6 mph and can cause loss of life and property. They form in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
- Plants typically grow best in the summer months when they receive the most sunlight. Most animals are active in the summer, rearing young, and some, like the squirrel, begin to gather nuts for the winter.
- The month of June came from the Roman goddess Juno, wife of Jupiter, while the month of July was named by Marc Anthony in honor of Julius Caesar. August was named after Julius Caesar's adopted nephew who gained the title Augustus.
- In 1896, the first Summer Olympics was held in Athens, Greece. It was officially known as the Games of the Olympiad. The games were housed in the first giant stadium of the modern times, Panathinaiko Stadium.
- A summer treat is watermelon. Watermelons are part of the cucumber family and consist of 92% water.



Accretion of Duties

- Submitted by Robert Lopez



An accretion of duties occurs when higher level work is unintentionally added to a position gradually over time. A position review is conducted to determine if the additional work supports the higher grade. If so, we then review whether the occupant(s) of the position can be noncompetitively promoted.

It is the responsibility of the HR specialist to identify and approve accretion promotions. These are exceptions to the competitive process and are **RARE**. Because an accretion promotion is a noncompetitive exception in the competitive service, usage of this procedure is subject to careful scrutiny. The responsible HR specialist identifies the occupational circumstance necessitating the promotion and identifies whether competitive or noncompetitive procedures shall be followed. Not only does the specialist document the classification analysis and certify that the position shall be classified at a higher grade, but when noncompetitive promotion procedures are to be followed, the personnel specialist should document that noncompetitive procedures are appropriate and that qualification and time-in-grade requirements have been met.

The process of accretion must be a gradual one, occurring over an extended period of time. The amount of time will vary depending on a variety of facts but it is clear that higher level duties cannot simply be added to a position such as when another employee leaves and the organization adds duties from the vacated position to another position.

COMPLICATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Accretion of duty circumstances are not necessarily straightforward. There are several complicating issues surrounding the practice of noncompetitively promoting an employee due to additional duties, including the following:

- The appropriateness of possibly accreting across series lines
- The required length of time performing the higher graded duties
- The managerial circumstance relative to the assignment of higher-graded work
- Whether or not a desk audit must be conducted
- Whether it is proper to accrete a position more than once

Each issue is important and determinations must be made by the responsible personnel specialist to ensure that the accretion action is in order.

NONCOMPETITIVE VERSUS COMPETITIVE

There are times when, even though a position review discloses that a position must be upgraded due to additional duties, the action cannot be processed noncompetitively. Two interrelated considerations impose on the determination whether an accretion promotion shall be processed through competitive or noncompetitive procedures. The considerations are the office circumstance and the qualifications and eligibility of other employees in the office. When there is at least one other employee assigned in the office who is eligible for promotion and qualified for the position, the positions upgrade would be processed through merit promotion procedures to ensure that the other employee was not unduly or unfairly deprived of a promotional opportunity.

THE OFFICE CIRCUMSTANCE

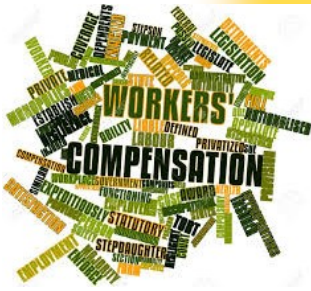
The term refers to the supervisory rating official's direct span of control; in other words, the immediate supervisor's span of control is the immediate office circumstance for accretion of duty. Employees who report to the same immediate supervisor for rating purposes are considered to be in the area of consideration, or the same organization, regardless of the organizational nomenclature (irrespective of whether the position is configured within a team, a unit, a section, a branch, a division, or an office). Thus, when there

is at least one other employee in the immediate office circumstance who is on the same PD or performing the same or essentially the same work and is both qualified and eligible for promotion—a promotion due to additional duties must be competed.

Even this plain interpretation of the immediate office circumstance can be further complicated by the existence of team leaders and other manner of limited supervisors. The immediate office for accretion of duty is circumscribed by the rating official span of control irrespective of an intervening team leader's responsibility to effectively recommend employee performance ratings. The need to compete an accretion action extends only to employees who report to the same rating official.

So in summary, an occupied position **MUST BE COMPETED** when:

- there are employees in the same work unit that are performing essentially the same duties and could logically be assigned the additional work,
- the review results in a new series,
- at least 50% of the previous work is not transferred to the new position,
- the PRIMARY work of the position is going from non-supervisory or non-lead work to supervisory or lead work.
 - Leader and/or supervisory duties represent an entirely different line of work and cannot be accreted noncompetitively.
- the new higher level work that resulted in an upgrade was not added inadvertently and gradually over an extended period of time.



Workers' Compensation Program Centralization

- Submitted by Angel Ponce

The Injury Compensation Center of Excellence

(ICCoE), part of the Army Benefits Center – Civilian (ABC-C) located at Fort Riley, KS, was established in 2012. The primary function of the ICCoE team, comprised of subject matter expert Injury Compensation Specialists (ICS), is to centrally manage the workers' compensation program for the Department of Army. Centralization of the workers' compensation program from local CPACs to the ICCoE is occurring through a phased approach and is scheduled to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2019.

The Fort Sam Houston program will be transferred to the Injury Compensation Center of Excellence (ICCoE), effective July 15, 2019. The ICCoE will be taking over all the functions that the Injury Com-

pensation Specialist (ICS) currently handles at Fort Sam Houston. ICCoE ICSs are responsible for ensuring that injured workers who file claims receive the medical care required to receive treatment and ultimately return to work. They are skilled in workers' compensation processes and provide guidance and advice to both employees and supervisors upon the initial notification of a claim and through the entire claims process. ICSs are valuable employees who protect the Army's interests by properly screening claims to ensure they meet the guidelines provided for receiving benefits under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA). Since centralization of the workers' compensation program throughout the Army, the ICCoE has saved its serviced locations over \$200 million in workers' compensation costs.



The following information is provided for the ICCoE:

Army Benefits Center-Civilian
ATTN: ICCoE

305 Marshall Ave

Fort Riley, KS 66442-7005

Phone: 1-866-792-7620

Fax: 785-239-1489

e-mail: usarmy.riley.chra-sw.mbx.workers-compensation@mail.mil

Hours of Operation

Monday – Thursday

7:00 am – 5:00 pm CT

Supervisors and employees who require checklists, forms, or answers to frequently asked questions should use the following link for the ABC-C Website: <https://wr.acpol.army.mil/abc/> and click on the Injury Compensation link under the Benefit Topics.



Where is your hometown?
Glenville, West Virginia.

Which Branch do you work for?
Dynamic D.

How long have you been with the CPAC?
Since February 2015.

What is your favorite part about working at the CPAC?
Knowing that the work I do supports our Soldiers and the Army's mission.

What is something most people would not know about you?
I was an Army Recruiter for 7 years.

What is it that you do that sets you apart in providing excellent customer service?
Closing the loop to ensure that all work is complete.

GRB Platform

- Submitted by Dianna Scales



As of 22 Apr 2019, the Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) was replaced by the Government Retirement and Benefits (GRB) Platform system. The GRB Platform will continue to provide the same basic information about retirement and your benefits just as EBIS did, but with more user-friendly features.

The best news is the Platform eliminates the need for a USERNAME and PIN. Instead, the Platform remains restricted by requiring the user to log in with their Common Access Card (CAC). With the Platform's new features, employees will have a true "one-stop-shopping" experience for both obtaining benefits information and making benefits transactions.

Although it will have a new "look and feel," the GRB Platform will offer you additional features. The GRB Platform will offer a self-service tool which will allow you to view a personalized statement of your benefits and a retirement calculator to perform "what-if" scenarios. You will also continue to have access to a comprehensive reference library and be able to view informational seminars on topics related to benefits, retirement, and financial planning.

Within each benefit tile is all the information you need relating to a particular benefits program, along with eSeminar videos and useful external links to additional resources. To access the GRB Platform, use the same URL as before, <https://www.ebis.army.mil>.

If you need help accessing the GRB Platform, you can contact a Benefits Specialists by calling DSN: 520-2222, commercial: (785) 240-ABCC (2222), or toll free: (877) 276-9287. Benefit Specialists are available Monday through Thursday from 7:00 am CT to 5:00 pm CT.



Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)

- Submitted by Steve Gonzalez

<https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/>

FERS is a retirement plan that provides benefits from three different sources: a Basic Benefit Plan, Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Two of the three parts of FERS (Social Security and the TSP) can go with you to your next job if you leave the Federal Government before retirement. The Basic Benefit and Social Security parts of FERS require you to pay your share each pay period. Your agency withholds the cost of the Basic Benefit and Social Security from your pay as payroll deductions. Your agency pays its part too. Then, after you retire, you receive annuity payments each month for the rest of your life.

The TSP part of FERS is an account that your agency automatically sets up for you. Each pay period your agency deposits into your account amount equal to 1% of the basic pay you earn for the pay period. You can also make your own contributions to your TSP account and your agency will also make a matching contribution. These contributions are tax-deferred. The Thrift Savings Plan is administered by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.

Through the menu links on the OPM website, you can find information about the following FERS retirement topics:

[Eligibility](#) – The main eligibility requirements for the common types of retirements.

[Computation](#) – How your retirement annuity is computed.

[Creditable Service](#) – Rules showing the civilian and military service that can be used to compute your FERS retirement benefits.

[Planning and Applying](#) – It's never too early to start planning for retirement in order to ensure it goes smoothly. Here you will find information to help ensure your retirement starts well.

[Early Retirement](#) – Explanation of the minimum retirement age and early retirement if your agency under goes a "reduction in force" or you are involuntarily separated other than for cause.

[Types of Retirement](#) – Learn about the age, service requirements and considerations affecting the various types of retirement.

[Deferred](#) – If you are a former Federal employee who was covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), you may be eligible for a deferred annuity at age 62 or the Minimum Retirement Age (MRA).

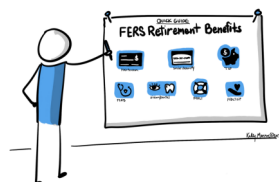
[Survivors](#) – When a Federal employee dies, monthly or lump sum benefits may be payable to survivors. Learn about these Survivor benefits here.

[Military Retired Pay](#) – Adding military service to your civilian service.

[Service Credit](#) – Payment to increase your annuity for civilian service when no CSRS retirement deductions were withheld or were refunded or for military service after 1956.

[Former Employees](#) – Options if you leave your Government job before becoming eligible for retirement.

For more information on FERS Retirement, visit Army Benefits Center – Civilian at <https://wr.acpol.army.mil/abc/>
(877) 276-9287,





Violence in the Workplace

- Submitted by Christy L. George

What is violence in the workplace?

Violence in the workplace is the threat or act of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening behavior that occurs at the place of duty.

When an incident of violence in the workplace occurs, employees or supervisors should immediately do the following:

- call 911
- Notify the military police at 221-2222
- Take steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the workforce and others
- Make arrangements for trauma debriefing, if necessary
- Complete Fort Sam Houston (FSH) Form 845, Workplace Violence Report
- Maintain notes of key events
- Provide periodic updates to the chain of command until the situation has stabilized
- Report incident to the Union of the affected bargaining union employee

Did you know...?

- Workplace bullying in its most severe form is violence. Its damage stems from psychological injury and stress-related diseases that destroy an employee's ability to perform work accurately.
- Homicide is the leading cause of death for women in the workplace.

The Employee Assistance Program

If you (or someone you know) are having personal problems that may be affecting your performance, assistance is available from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Please contact them at 1(800) 222-0364 or www.FOH4You.com. The EAP is designed to help employees with their personal problems. Initial counseling sessions are conducted during duty hours and are at no cost to you. However, please be advised that during duty hours you must coordinate any absence with your supervisor prior to visiting the Employee Assistance Program office.



CPAC's Active Shooter Training



Officer Chris Wieneke, from the 502 Security Forces Squadron, was invited to conduct Active Shooter Training to CPAC's staff.



James Deberry
Raymond Famanía
Antonio Gutierrez
Rose Navarro

Hail and Farewell



Diana Arias
Crystal Bennet
Nina Huerta
Manny Pinillo
Ingrid Richardson
Alonzo Soto

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Submitted by Diana Inkel



What is TSP?

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal employees and members of the Uniformed Services. It was established by Congress in the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) Act of 1986 and offers the same types of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans.

The TSP is a defined contribution plan, meaning the retirement income you receive from your TSP account will depend on how much you and your agency (if you are eligible to receive agency contributions) put into your account during your working years and the earnings accumulated over time.

If you are covered under FERS, the TSP is one part of a three-part retirement package that also includes your FERS basic annuity and Social Security. If you are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), the TSP is a supplement to your CSRS annuity.

Benefits of Participation

Whether you are covered by FERS or CSRS, participating in the TSP can significantly increase your retirement income. Saving for your retirement has many advantages:

- **Traditional (pre-tax) or Roth (after-tax) Contributions:** Traditional contributions come out of your pay before-tax, and investment earnings are tax-deferred.
- Roth contributions come out of your pay after-tax and are tax-free when withdrawn. Earnings on Roth contributions are paid tax-free when withdrawn as long as certain Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules are met. The 2019 IRS elective deferral limit is \$19,000.
- **Agency Automatic Contributions:** If you are covered by FERS, you automatically receive 1% of your basic pay from your agency each pay period whether you contribute to the TSP from your own pay.
- **Agency Matching Contributions:** If you are covered by FERS and you contribute 5% of your basic pay to the TSP each pay period, your agency will contribute an additional 4% of your basic pay to your TSP account.
- **Catch-Up Contributions:** If you are age 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$6,000.
- **Multiple Fund Investment Options:** You have a choice of diversified investment funds or you can select from **professionally** designed Lifecycle Funds.
- **Minimal Cost:** You pay very low administrative and investment expenses.

Managing Your Account: Online and ThriftLine

You will find the most current plan information and material on the TSP website. As a participant, you can use your TSP account number or user ID and your Web password to view your account information and perform transactions.

The ThriftLine is the TSP's automated telephone service. The number is toll-free within the United States. It has information such as Plan News, share prices, and annuity rates. You also have the option to speak with a Participant Service Representative.

Visit the TSP Website at <https://www.tsp.gov> or call the Thriftline at 1-877-968-3778 or TDD 1-877-847-4385. Participant Service Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

CPAC Director's All Hands May 2019



Ms. Leslie Noel of the Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) was invited to conduct a training class to the CPAC Staff.

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<https://www.samhouston.army.mil/cpac/index.aspx>



<https://www.facebook.com/Ft-Sam-Houston-Civilian-Personnel-Advisory-Center-217123538373277/>



<https://twitter.com/FSHCPAC>



usarmy.jbsa.hqda-cpac.mbx.inquiry@mail.mil

DCHRMS

- Submitted by Diana Kent



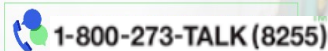
What's the Latest on DCHRMS...

Many of you have probably heard through your organization's HR (G-1) channels, that in an effort to improve efficiency and effectiveness the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) and Defense Management Data Center (DMDC) are working a modernization initiative to transition the Department of Defense (DoD) from the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) to the Defense Civilian Human Resources Management System (DCHRMS). DCHRMS is designed to be a less labor intensive transactional civilian personnel system that maintains civilian employee records. Additionally DCHRMS will introduce new processes and new terminology for conducting human resources work.

The new proposed deployment date for DCHRMS has been moved to December 2019. To learn more, visit DCPAS DCHRMS at <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/OD/DCHRMS>.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.



FSH CPAC OPERATING HOURS



The Fort Sam Houston (FSH) Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) operating business hours are from 0800 -1500. Anything outside the FSH CPAC core business hours will always be supported. However, we ask that an appointment or prior coordination be made accordingly. For additional information, questions, or inquiries please call (210) 221-1425.

The FSH CPAC is closed for training on the first Thursday of each month from 1400 -1600.

We appreciate your patience and support during this time. The FSH CPAC staff will return phone calls and emails the next business day.